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Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7154th meeting
Sunday, 13 April 2014, 8 p.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Llanos
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

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The meeting was called to order at 8.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fernandez-Taranco.

Mr. Fernandez-Taranco: Once again, since the last briefing to the Council, presented by the Secretary-General on 28 March, the situation regarding Ukraine has seriously deteriorated. This is now the tenth time that the Council has addressed the issue. The General Assembly also took up the matter on 27 March (see A/68/PV.80).

Following close to two weeks of relative calm, starting on 6 April armed individuals and separatist groups began to seize Government buildings and confiscate lethal weapons in Donetsk oblast of Ukraine, including in the cities of Donetsk, Lugansk and Kharkiv. The individuals involved called for secession from Ukraine and for joining the Russian Federation. In Donetsk, some of these individuals declared a People's Republic of Donetsk.

It has now been reported that there have been at least five new cities in eastern Ukraine targeted by uprisings and seizures of Government buildings in the past 24 hours, including the towns of Sloviansk, Kramatorsk and Druzhkivka. United Nations monitors have reported a consistent reinforcement of barricades and armed civilians on both sides. They also sighted armed militiamen with AK-47s, machine guns and sniper rifles. United Nations monitors have also reported duelling rallies in Kharkiv today, resulting in injuries to some 50 persons. On the eve of 13 April, authorities in Kyiv launched an "anti-terror" operation to reclaim Sloviansk, a day after it was overrun by pro-separatist activists, whom the United Nations human rights monitors on the ground have described as well-armed and well-organized militiamen.

As of 13 April, at least one Ukrainian officer has been killed in a gun battle; however, the exact number of casualties in the skirmishes remains unknown. Numerous others have been reported wounded. Also today, Ukraine's acting President, Oleksandr Turchynov, signed a presidential decree, giving the self-declared separatists until 6 a.m. Kyiv time to give up their weapons in order to avoid prosecution. The President further declared in a televised address to the nation that if illegal activities were not halted, a full-scale operation involving the Ukrainian army would be launched.

The Russian Federation has publicly stated on several occasions that it would be "forced to act" if Kyiv were to employ force against demonstrators in the East. The situation is therefore now more combustible than ever. The Secretary-General and the United Nations remain committed to the pursuit of a peaceful solution to this ever-deepening crisis. The Secretary-General has continued to speak out for the exercise of maximum restraint by all concerned and strict adherence to international law. He also continues to urge all others with influence on the situation to immediately and publicly call for restraint and a return to calm. The Secretary-General further appeals for direct and constructive dialogue between the parties, and between Kyiv and Moscow, to de-escalate the situation and address all differences.

It has become painfully evident that the Ukraine crisis will continue to deepen if intensive efforts are not urgently made by all concerned to de-escalate the situation. At this moment, Ukraine teeters on the very brink. However, it is not just Ukraine that will suffer from a scenario where the likelihood of further bloodshed and violent clashes grows by the hour. Russia, which shares a long border area with Ukraine as well as the broader European region, faces a spillover effect of potentially severe consequences. Such scenarios will also have repercussions for the entire international community.

The President: I thank Mr. Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has called for this emergency meeting of the Security Council because of the serious dangerous evolution of the situation in south-eastern Ukraine. We have pointed out on several occasions, including in this Chamber, that the reckless actions that led to the coup d'état by the self-proclaimed Kyiv authorities threaten to definitively destroy the fragile mosaic of Ukrainian society. The authorities do not wish to listen to those who do not accept the imposed dominance of Kyiv by national radicals and chauvinistic, Russophobic and anti-Semitic forces, whom they perceive as a threat to their human dignity and to their very lives.

Grotesque Russophobia and entrenched hatred have become the norm in the Verkhovna Rada as well. A few days ago, a member of Parliament belonging to the chauvinist Svoboda party said this about the Russian-speaking inhabitants of Ukraine:

> "I would have acted much more harshly. I would simply have shot them. The enemy is prevailing in our land. They should have been chased out in 1654. These creatures deserve only one thing — death."

It should be noted that this was said by a woman. We can only imagine the thoughts that must be churning in the minds of her brutal fellow partisans. And that is not even the most radical group on the Ukrainian political spectrum. Should we be surprised that the peaceful political protects and the call by the people of south-eastern Ukraine for their aspirations to be heard have been met by the Rada with draconic laws entailing long-term prison sentences for separatism?

The events of the past two days have shown that, following our many calls for the organization of inclusive national political dialogue, a measure of common sense has prevailed in Kyiv. Prime Minister Yatsenyuk went to Donetsk; although he did not meet with the protesters, he did say the right things about dialogue, decentralization and his desire to find a way out of the problem.

What is the situation today? We have been told that restraint will be exercised and a peaceful solution found to the situation that takes into account the opinions of the various groupings of the Ukrainian population. That has been confirmed by our Western interlocutors. However, on 13 April the Verkhovna Rada-appointed President Turchynov stated that the Ukrainian Security Council had decided to launch a full-scale anti-terrorist operation, including the use of the armed forces. However, unlike the Maidan demonstrators, the protesters have terrorized no one, have used no bulldozers against the authorioties, and thrown no Molotov cocktails. It is no coincidence that law-enforcement officers were present among the Maidan protestors.

Now the Kyiv authorities must use force to suppress other areas of the country. According to Turchynov, the people of south-eastern Ukraine must end their protests by the morning of Monday, 14 April, lest armed force be used. However, the protesters' interests and opinions have not been taken into account or even discussed. As a result, blood has already been shed in the South-East and the situation is extremely dangerous. Any further escalation of the situation must be swiftly stopped.

The international community must require the Maidan henchmen who seized power in Kyiv to cease their war against their own people and to implement all the commitments under the 21 February agreement. The Western sponsors of the Maidan henchmen, in particular those who stood as witnesses to the agreement and the United States, which is their backer, are obligated to end their support, dissociate themselves from neo-Nazis and other extremists, stop the use of force against the Ukrainian people, and begin forthwith a genuine national dialogue with the full participation of all regions, in the interests of the speedy implementation of radical constitutional reform.

It is the West that must determine the opportunity for avoiding civil war in Ukraine. Some people, including in this Chamber, do not wish to recognize the real reasons for the events in Ukraine and are forever seeing the hand of Moscow in the South-East. Enough is enough. They must stop claiming that we have deployed our army along the border with that country and are practically already at the English Channel, and that we have sent agents to coordinate the protests in Ukraine. It must be understood that south-eastern Ukraine and its people are deeply worried about their future and that they do not want anyone, especially the nationalist radicals, to impose their [illegible] on them.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting. I also wish to thank Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing.

Lithuania is deeply concerned about the sharp deterioration of the situation in eastern Ukraine.

External forces and local provocateurs continue to fuel separatism and hatred, destabilizing the situation in eastern Ukraine on the eve of the 25 May elections. The scenario is dangerously familiar. Where there was no unrest, unrest and chaos are being created by pro-Russian militias, again anonymous and without insignia, and again carrying modern models of assault weapons as seen in Crimea. Again, considerable Russian troops are massed on Ukraine's borders. Again, the external anti-Ukranian and anti-Western propaganda machine is in full swing, inciting suspicion, mistrust and hatred waiting to explode. Ukraine's traitor Yanukovich, who abandoned his country and fled, opening the floodgates to Crimea's annexation, is being pushed again into the daylight to clear the way for Ukraine's further dismemberment.

Groups of provocateurs in the hundreds, supported by pro-Russian militias, are attacking buildings of Ukraine's State institutions and declaring independence from Ukraine, as well as announcing plans for new referendums on joining Russia, in spite of the fact that recent opinion polls clearly show that the predominant majority of people in the region see their future inextricably linked to Ukraine. In fact, about 65 per cent of the region's residents, according to opinion polls, have expressed their desire to remain part of Ukraine, while only 18.2 per cent want to join Russia.

Tragically, bloodshed is happening where there was no bloodshed before pro-Russian militants started their creeping secessionist provocations. It is as clear as day that, in spite of the reassurances we heard from Moscow a few weeks ago, military aggression against Ukraine and its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity has not stopped with Crimea. My Government strongly condemns the actions of the separatist groups and their sponsors in the Donetsk region, as well as in the regions of Luhansk and Kharkiv.

Lithuania supports the efforts of the Government of Ukraine to resolve this complex and unpredictable situation in a peaceful way. Ukraine's Government has reached out repeatedly to the separatists. In the most difficult of political and economic circumstances, Ukraine's acting President Turchinov has decided to prepare a law on decentralization, granting more powers to the regions. Acting Prime Minister Yatseniuk has clearly stated that the Government must respond to people's desire to have more regional authority. That decision is an important step forward, showing the flexibility and readiness of legitimate Ukrainian authorities to heed its population and engage constructively.

Prime Minister Yatseniuk also reassured the Russian-speaking population regarding the use of the Russian language. Furthermore, amnesty was offered to all militants who laid down arms and returned to seeking a peaceful solution to existing issues.

It is obvious that the Ukrainian Government is doing everything possible, under such dramatic circumstances, to respond to the legitimate needs and concerns of the population, to curb corruption and impunity, which had reigned under Yanukovich, to re-establish law and order and the authority of the State and to address the problems the Government inherited from years of neglect and mismanagement. We fully support those efforts and once again stress the extraordinary restraint and patience with which Ukraine's Government has continued to respond to the unending provocations and efforts to dismember the State by armed pro-Russian militants and separatists.

At the same time, when the existence of a State is put in danger, we understand and support the right of Ukraine to defend itself in the face of external aggression and to tackle militant separatism and continuous provocations in order to protect the State and its population from a further escalation of violence.

The international community and members of the Council should not be fooled by the pronouncements of the likes of Yanukovich and his corrupt cronies. The independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine are being threatened, and that threat is a threat to the security and stability of the whole region and Europe, with serious international repercussions.

We urge the Russian Federation to call back its troops from the Ukrainian border, to stop supporting separatist groups and to cease all other actions aimed at destabilizing Ukraine. The meeting among the United States, Russia, Ukraine and the European Union foreseen for 17 April in Geneva wold offer a viable chance for dialogue and diplomacy. We call on Russia not to waste that opportunity.

Ms. Power (United States of America): The human stakes of what is happening in Ukraine are extremely high. The lives of innocent civilians are at risk, yet we are being bombarded by Russian disinformation and propaganda, while the Ukrainians are being confronted by incitement and violence. Russian media

and Government spokespersons are spreading fiction, so we must tonight focus on facts.

The Council has heard, these last weeks, Russia disclaim any intention of occupying or invading. The Council has heard it publicly, and we have heard it privately. Unfortunately, the fact is that the armed seizure of buildings in six eastern Ukrainian towns yesterday, and several more today, mirrors the tactics Russian forces used in the early stages of the Crimea invasion. Then, too, officials from the Russian Federation spoke early on in the crisis and disclaimed any intention of occupying or invading. In the earlier Crimean case, highly organized, well-equipped and professional forces wearing Russian military uniforms and military gear without identifying insignia moved in first to take control of Crimean Government and security facilities, before being later replaced by regular Russian military forces. Then, too, Russia said it was acting to protect minorities' rights. But the whole world now knows that they were not. As the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has reported, the minorities at risk in Crimea are Tatars and Ukrainians.

The Council has heard that there are no Russian troops in eastern Ukraine, but the fact is that many of the armed units that we have seen were outfitted in bullet-proof vests and camouflage uniforms with insignia removed. Those armed units, some wearing black and orange Saint George's ribbons — associated with Russian Victory Day celebrations — raised Russian and separatist flags over seized buildings and have called for referendums and union with Russia. We know who is behind that; indeed, the only entity in the area capable of those coordinated, professional military actions is Russia.

The synchronized surgical seizure of buildings yesterday occurred in towns along the main highway, followed by armed roadblocks, almost as if a coordinated barrier were being formed between Kyiv and the major eastern cities of Donetsk and Luhansk. The Council does not have to take my word for it — or even that of the Ukrainian Government — it need only witness for itself the videos of professional military shepherding thugs into a building in Kramatorsk; the photographs showing the so-called concerned citizens taking over Sloviansk, equipped exactly like the elite troops that took Crimea; or the video of a military operation in Krasny Liman by armed men with the same equipment.

The Council has heard laments about instability, as if instability were organic. But the fact is that this is the saddest kind of instability: it is completely man-made. This instability was written and choreographed in and by Russia.

We continue efforts to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine and find a diplomatic path forward, which is why Secretary Kerry will participate in the Geneva talks on 17 April, which will include Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. But if those are to be successful, Russia will have to explain why its forces continue to mass on the Ukrainian border — at least 40,000 forces — and it will have to come with constructive ideas on how to de-escalate and resolve the armed attacks on buildings in eastern Ukraine.

The United States stands with Ukraine and the fundamental principle that the future of Ukraine must be decided by the Ukrainian people. We also stand with international law and norms and the fundamental principle that borders are not suggestions. On Monday, we will conclude the $1 billion loan guarantee for Ukraine. That will benefit all the Ukrainian people, including minorities. Next week, Vice-President Biden will visit Ukraine. We strongly support concluding the agreement between Ukraine and the International Monetary Fund so that the international community can bolster Ukraine's economy. And we will support in every way we can Ukraine's elections at the end of May so that Ukraine can advance its political transition and look to a peaceful future.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is gravely concerned by events in eastern Ukraine, which have escalated over the past 48 hours, with armed men seizing control of Government buildings and erecting checkpoints and barricades in six different cities. Street protests have given way to violent action. That is a dangerous escalation of an already dangerous situation.

We have all seen the video footage of events over the weekend: professional, well-armed and well-equipped units wearing identical uniforms conducting coordinated military operations against Ukrainian State institutions. That is a pattern that is all too familiar. Coming just weeks after Russian troops illegally deployed to Crimea while wearing uniforms without insignia, these events point clearly to Russia once again interfering directly in the internal affairs of Ukraine while using manufactured pretexts and military force. Such actions are contrary to international law, have already been condemned by the international

community and have been declared invalid by the General Assembly.

As a Member of the United Nations, and as a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia is obliged to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State. Yet satellite images show that there are between 35,000 and 40,000 Russian troops in the vicinity of the border with Ukraine, equipped with combat aircraft, tanks, artillery and logistical support units. That is in addition to the 25,000 Russian troops based illegally in Crimea.

Just as six weeks ago Russia denied deploying its troops to Crimea, it also now denies that it has amassed troops on Ukraine's eastern border. It claims that the publicly available satellite images illustrating that troop deployment were taken in August 2013. That is false; additional images released on 11 April show clearly that the build-up started in early March of this year.

Russia's aggressive stance is a clear threat to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The United Kingdom calls on Russia immediately to redeploy its troops away from the border, cease all activity designed to heighten tensions and sow discord, and revoke the mandate given by the Federation Council on 1 March to use military force on Ukrainian soil.

The Russian Federation has made little secret of its efforts to undermine the process of reconciliation in Ukraine. Rather than assisting its neighbours in rebuilding their country after the fall of a deeply corrupt regime that left the nation on the verge of bankruptcy, Russia has instead sought to destabilize the country further in pursuit of its narrow interests. Russia must desist from those steps and address whatever grievances it has through dialogue, starting with the contact group talks scheduled for this coming week.

The international community is not fooled by the Kremlin's use of propaganda and misinformation to spread fears among the population of eastern Ukraine. Contrary to Russian claims, the recent demonstrations in eastern cities are not organic. They do not enjoy widespread support, and the numbers of genuine protestors on the streets pale in comparison to the crowds of hundreds of thousands who protested against the former regime. Rather, what we are witnessing is a well-orchestrated campaign designed to destabilize the country. If Russia really has genuine concerns about Ukraine's Russian-speaking population, then its actions have done nothing to safeguard their interests. The illegal annexation of Crimea, stoking tensions and provoking violence in eastern Ukraine, hurt and endanger all the people of Ukraine.

The special monitoring mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations human rights monitoring mission are in Ukraine to observe the situation and report on developments. Their presence is designed to safeguard the rights of all the citizens of Ukraine. We look forward to their assessment of the situation and we fully support their work.

Russia is seeking to impose its will on the people of Ukraine by using misinformation, intimidation and aggression — tactics drawn from the darkest days of the past century. That is completely unacceptable. The Ukrainian people have the right to determine their own future free from Russian interference.

On 25 May Ukraine will elect a new president. The Ukrainian Government has stated clearly that its programme of constitutional reform will include discussions on the degree of autonomy devolved to Ukraine's regions. That is a clear pathway to resolve differences through peaceful, constitutional means. The use of armed force that we are now witnessing in eastern Ukraine to impose one set of views on the peaceful majority is therefore entirely without justification. Moscow must reject these latest unlawful actions, and do so publicly.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): Since yesterday, we have seen the abrupt and simultaneous outbreak of violence in eastern Ukraine: nothing about it was spontaneous. France condemns the violence. We call on all parties to exercise restraint and dialogue so that a peaceful solution to the crisis quickly emerges. Everyone must work towards de-escalation.

The scenario we are seeing reminds one of the events that took place in Crimea one month ago: simultaneous action by a small but trained group of aggressive activists determined to occupy territory, followed by the presence of disciplined, masked men wearing uniforms and armed with weapons of war that are not found in military surplus. Those facts, which come to us through the waves of images on the Internet, are the same as the ones that Russia labelled a month ago as spontaneous demonstrations by local self-defence groups. No one believed it then, and we

do not believe it today. One gets the impression that, in denying the facts, Russia is unaware of the existence of the Internet and that it serves to contradict its denials. Let us not forget that such protests were a prelude to the annexation of Crimea.

Moreover, the build-up of Russian troops for several weeks now — under the guise of military exercises — casts an ominous shadow over eastern Ukraine. Further still, the economic pressure is becoming more biting. Without dialogue with the Ukrainian side, which it has taken by the throat, Russia has brutally raised the price of gas. It blocks the entry of goods at the border between Russia and Ukraine, no doubt in an effort to stifle a country it calls its brother. Finally, Russia is systematically bombarding Ukraine with a message of defiance vis-à-vis Kyiv via the airwaves and television channels, which, for many people who do not have access to various sources of information, is the only message they hear.

It is against that backdrop that France commends the level-headedness of Ukrainian officials who, against that destabilizing torrent of events, seek to resolve the crisis through dialogue. That is the spirit in which Prime Minister Yatsenyuk visited eastern Ukraine with specific proposals in response to the real questions of people overwhelmed by propaganda who are disoriented and being exploited by radical groups. France has always been clear on the issue of the status of languages and regions. We encourage the authorities in Kyiv to continue their efforts for cooler heads to prevail, enter into a constructive dialogue and reassure people about their place in Ukraine.

The future of Ukraine should not, and cannot, be up to anyone else but the Ukrainians themselves. We should support the Ukrainian authorities in organizing elections, under the best of conditions, that ensure that everyone is represented. Our message has always been clear that the presidential election scheduled for 25 May must be free and transparent and guaranteed by the presence of international observers.

We reiterate our commitment to the territorial integrity of Ukraine. We call on Russia commit to de-escalation and to condemn, along with the rest of the Council, the attempts at destabilization carried out by armed groups in eastern Ukraine. We also call on Russia to fully assume its role as a permanent member of the Security Council. Russia is a guarantor of peace and security in the world, both in the larger world and in its immediate neighbourhood. There cannot be two different standards. Russia must today put its full weight behind helping Ukraine regain stability. It must show itself up to the task of playing the role it wishes to play as a pillar of Euro-Asian stability. We hope that the proposed meeting on 17 April among Russia, Ukraine, the United States and the European Union will be held and that it makes it possible for solutions to emerge. This is a crucial stage and we call on all parties to exercise calm and restraint.

In conclusion, I would like to raise a final warning call. The danger that now faces us is the failure of all our concerted efforts to build an international order that is not based on force, for today it is force alone that is seeking to impose the law.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this emergency meeting on the situation in Ukraine. I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing on the worrying situation in eastern Ukraine.

We are very alarmed by reports of increased tensions in eastern Ukraine in the past several days. We condemn the attack that killed a State security officer and wounded five others in the eastern city of Slovyansk. The perpetrators of that criminal act should be brought to justice. I take this opportunity to echo the Secretary-General's call to all sides to work towards calming the situation.

After numerous calls for the de-escalation of the crisis, the situation has become more complex for the diverse Ukrainian community. It is imperative to protect the rights of the citizens of Ukraine regardless of ethnic background. We reiterate our call for an inclusive dialogue, a frank and open discussion that is mutually beneficial for all the parties concerned.

Although Rwanda agrees in principle that Ukraine, like any other country, has a right to self-defence and to promote its territorial integrity, its acts should be proportional. We discourage any military act that would put the lives of innocent civilians in danger.

Rwanda remains of the view that military action will only worsen the already tense situation. We encourage all the parties involved, particularly in the current situation, to exercise full restraint. It is vital to allow the diplomatic efforts that have already been deployed to work. The international community cannot watch another crisis slip out of its hands. We must act on what we stand for — peace and security. We welcome the discussion among the United States, Ukraine and

Russia due to take place on 17 April. We encourage United Nations participation in those talks.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the Security Council, the only world body in charge of maintaining international peace and security, must work towards restoring its own unity in order to be able to defend the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of a States Members of the United Nations, while addressing the interests of the countries of the region. We recognize that there are political interests involved. However, we should not forget that ordinary Ukrainians are caught in the midst of this conflict; all they want and ask for is a peaceful country. This we should all be mindful of.

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Jordan is deeply concerned about the recent developments in eastern Ukraine and the accompanying escalation, which could increase the threats to the stability of that region. What is happening there is a mutiny against the State and the Constitution of Ukraine. If it continues it will lead inevitably to the dismemberment and dismantling of the Ukrainian State. Ukraine therefore has a right and a duty to its citizens to preserve its unity and territorial integrity, and, even more important, to restore every part of its territory.

We call on the Ukrainian authorities to attempt to use every possible means to resolve the crisis and keep open the channels for dialogue with the rebels and all the relevant parties in order to put an end to this mutiny. We also appeal to them to respect the principles of human rights in dealing with the crisis. We call on the influential parties to exert every effort to convince the rebels to bring a peaceful end to the crisis, to end their armed demonstrations and acts of intimidation, and to withdraw from Ukrainian public and Government buildings.

The Security Council should also send a clear message of support for Ukraine and its authorities in their efforts to end this movement of armed insurrection, to promote the rule of law and to preserve the country's unity and territorial integrity. There should be no interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine, no act of intimidation and no threat of use of force against it, which would contravene the principles and positions of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we reaffirm that it is in the interests of the international community as a whole to maintain the integrity of the provisions of international law and to refrain from creating excuses and justifications for military intervention against States, in contravention of the Charter. International law is the cornerstone of equality among States and is designed to protect them from armed threats to their sovereignty regardless of their size, importance or military might.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Like all of us, Australia has watched the events in eastern Ukraine with mounting concern. What we have seen unfold is a coordinated operation where well-trained and well-armed paramilitary units have moved quickly to lay siege to, occupy and control key institutions in five or six towns in Donetsk province. The violence in Sloviansk has led to one death and nine wounded. The stakes are obviously dangerously high. This has not been a spontaneous, grassroots, broad-based protest movement by local inhabitants; rather it is a pattern of highly orchestrated destabilization by pro-Russian groups. Those groups have included units of highly trained armed men with Russian military equipment, operating without identifying insignia. Those units have used force to storm and besiege local Government buildings and institutions.

If all that sounds familiar, it is because we have seen the playbook used by Russia in Crimea. In that case, it became clear that the militias were in fact Russian forces. We condemn any use of proxy forces. A State cannot seek to avoid responsibility for its actions by attempting to cloak the identity of those working on its behalf. The principles of State responsibility make it very clear that a State bears international responsibility for acts undertaken by informal actors whom it engages on its behalf.

We have heard Russia's statement about the crisis taking place in eastern Ukraine, but what we are actually witnessing is violence and destabilization in an effort to manufacture a sense of crisis and separatism. Ukraine's response to those provocations has been one of restraint under intolerable threats to its stability and independence. There is no evidence of actions directed at Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine that could possibly justify an intervention by Russia. Nor is there the generalized anarchy claimed. The ongoing work of the special mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is all the more important for providing an objective account of the situation in eastern Ukraine, and we welcome the information that the number of monitors will be significantly increased in coming days.

International condemnation of Russia's actions against Ukraine in the past six weeks has been resounding. General Assembly resolution 68/262 unambiguously condemned the threat and use of force in this manner as contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and to Russia's specific treaty obligations to Ukraine. Many countries, including my own, have imposed unilateral sanctions to register the depth of their concern. Repeated calls for de-escalation have been ignored.

Russia's major military build-up along Ukraine's eastern border has been a significant and deliberation provocation that only further escalates tensions and the likelihood of conflict. It deepens Russia's own isolation and also, of course, strengthens the resolve of the international community to stand with and support Ukraine as it seeks to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The only way forward, as we all know, is de-escalation, dialogue and the free elections that are planned for 25 May. And Ukraine must be allowed to prepare for those elections without the interference and coercion we are witnessing.

But talks can take place only with genuine commitment and good faith on all sides. The talks between Russia, Ukraine, the European Union and the United States planned for 17 April are an essential step in that direction, but can take place successfully only on that basis. Attempts to change the facts on the ground are completely contrary to dialogue and peaceful resolution. We call on Russia to work immediately to reduce tensions, stop its destabilization and withdraw its forces from the provocative posture they have assumed on Ukraine's border. We have heard assurances in the past that Russia will take such action. It now really is imperative that it do so.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing.

China is deeply worried about the recent escalation of the situation in Ukraine. We hope that the relevant parties will remain calm, exercise restraint and avoid any further deterioration of the situation.

Settling the question of Ukraine involves the interests and concerns of all parties. It should be considered in a balanced manner. Political and diplomatic channels should continue to be pursued in order to narrow differences and settle the issue within the framework of law and order. China has consistently called on the international community to make constructive efforts and employ good offices to ease the situation in Ukraine, and will continue to support the international community in those endeavours.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I, too, would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing on the developments in Ukraine and on the involvement of the United Nations. I also welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine at this meeting.

Argentina continues to follow the situation with concern, in particular in the east of Ukraine. Undoubtedly, the situation has deteriorated, with further tensions and violence, and we cannot remain indifferent to that. We are deeply concerned that the tension and violence may continue and indeed worsen. We are also concerned about the consequences for Ukraine and the region.

The delegation of Argentina reiterates that it is essential that we adhere to the principles that we subscribe to as Members of the United Nations. In particular, we must remember our commitment to non-interference in the internal affairs of States, whether militarily, politically or economically. In that respect, we believe that the action of any State or international organization must duly respect Ukraine's handling of its own affairs. As we have expressed on several occasions, the situation will not be resolved through any kind of unilateral action. It is crucial that the use of force be avoided. We join the Secretary-General today in calling on all parties to endeavour to bring calm to the situation. Maximal self-restraint must be shown, and constructive dialogue sought and established on an urgent basis in order to de-escalate the situation and address the parties' differences.

In conclusion, Argentina will continue to promote dialogue and a peaceful settlement of the crisis. It is essential to step up efforts to create the conditions necessary for urgent dialogue to begin so that solutions can be found to the parties' differences and the interests of all minorities are taken into account. The multilateral meeting among the United States, the Russian Federation and the European Union that is planned for Thursday, 17 April will present an opportunity to do so. We hope that those main actors will be able to achieve the agreement necessary. We reiterate that the international community should concentrate its efforts on establishing dialogue. We stress that Ukrainians

must have a democratic and peaceful outcome to the situation.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing.

The Republic of Korea is closely watching the recent developments in the eastern part of Ukraine. We are deeply concerned over the escalation of tensions in various cities of eastern Ukraine, including the worrying seizure of key public buildings in Donetsk and Slovyansk by force. Those actions will only further exacerbate the already tense situation, and we condemn any use of force to change the situation on the ground.

As Ukraine moves towards critical elections in May, we believe that political differences must be addressed in a non-violent way through a legitimate process. United Nations States Members should respect that process, and there should not be any influence exerted by outside forces. We reiterate our strong support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing.

Chad is deeply concerned by the violent acts committed by armed men and separatist groups in various cities in the east of Ukraine. The actions of those insurgents, who are reportedly well-equipped and well-organized, are aimed at taking possession of public buildings in several cities, further destabilizing Ukraine and compromising the search for a lasting political solution.

Chad condemns every instance of violence that occurred yesterday and today. As we have stated many times in previous meetings of the Security Council on the same matter, the solution to the Ukrainian crisis can only be political, not military. Therefore, the attacks by armed and clearly well-organized men in unmarked uniforms are only making an already explosive situation worse.

Given the dangerous turn that the situation is taking, we call upon all the parties concerned to show restraint and calm. We call on them to give priority to a peaceful solution that respects the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Ukraine. In that vein, a political settlement of the crisis necessarily requires that the interests and concerns of all parts of Ukrainian society, in all its diversity, be taken into account. Neither the attempts of the armed insurgents calling for parts of Ukraine to be integrated into Russia nor the recourse to force against those insurgents — much less a possible intervention by foreign forces — will help to solve the Ukrainian crisis.

The age-old historical, geographic and cultural links between Ukraine and the Russian Federation should in principle serve as a basis for new and healthier relations of good neighbourliness, mutual respect and cooperation between them. In that context, we encourage the Secretary-General and the entire international community to pursue their mediation efforts in order to align the positions of the parties involved and find a peaceful solution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing on the developments in the situation in Ukraine. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Yuriy Sergeyev, to the Council.

Luxembourg is deeply concerned about the recent events in eastern and south-eastern Ukraine. Yesterday in Sloviansk, in the Donetsk region, masked and armed men took control of a police station, and then the headquarters of the town's security services, and put up barricades, blocking access to the town. There are also reports coming from the town of Kramatorsk that armed individuals have taken over a police station and there has been an exchange of fire with the police. Over the weekend, other towns in the Donetsk region saw similiar incidents, which appear to be coordinated and well orchestrated, recalling the events that took place in Crimea.

In that regard, we see a continuation of the actions undertaken by Russia on the territory of Ukraine in recent weeks. Those actions are a flagrant violation of international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act, and run counter to the commitments that Russia has made to Ukraine under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and the Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership, signed in 1997.

In that context, we welcome the self-control and restraint shown to date by the Ukrainian authorities in the face of repeated violations of the sovereignty

and territorial integrity of their country in the past six weeks. However, we all know that the Ukrainian Government cannot stand there without doing anything in the face of this new threat to its territorial integrity. Like every State Member of the United Nations, Ukraine has the right to defend itself by virtue of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

This evening, Russia reiterated its version of events, according to which the demands of the eastern and south-eastern regions of Ukraine are being ignored by Kyiv. However, that does reflect the facts. We commend Ukraine's consistent affirmation that it is ready for an inclusive political dialogue that takes into account the interests of all Ukrainians and all regions of Ukraine. The Prime Minister of Ukraine, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, recently reaffirmed that during his visit to Donetsk on 11 April. However, political dialogue on the country's future and revising the Constitution cannot take place under the threat of a foreign invasion. That threat must not jeopardize the opportunity for Ukrainians to express their sovereign will, in the presence of international observers, in the free and fair presidential election on 25 May.

We must urgently strive to de-escalate the crisis. We therefore join colleagues in calling for calm and restraint and in renewing the appeal to Russia to withdraw its forces massed near the Ukrainian border. Russia must stop its actions to destabilize eastern Ukraine and distance itself from the separatist militia activity. Continuing the military escalation would have untold consequences.

For its part, Luxembourg would like to believe that it is still possible to settle the Ukrainian crisis peacefully. Multilateral bodies, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe all have a role to play, in particular through the observers whom they have deployed on the ground. However, a peaceful solution first and foremost requires direct dialogue between Russia and Ukraine. In that regard, we hope that the four-party talks, bringing together the diplomatic leaders of Ukraine, Russia, the United States and the European Union in Geneva on 17 April, will make is possible to begin a dialogue and to find a way out of the gravest crisis that Europe has seen since the end of the Cold War. The tension and violence of recent days must not be used as a pretext to reject all dialogue.

The time is critical. There is not a minute to lose in ensuring that dialogue prevails over violence, reason over emotions and peace over war.

Mr. Llanos (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing and welcome the convening of this meeting at this critical time for Ukraine and the region. We face a sensitive development in the crisis in Ukraine. Chile regrets the outbreaks of violence seen in the eastern regions, specifically in Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv, and expresses its deep concern over the serious consequences of the escalation of the crisis owing to the actions of separatist groups.

It is critical that the parties exercise the maximum restraint in order to contain the crisis. Our country once again reiterates the need to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We also reaffirm the obligation incumbent on Members of the United Nations to refrain from resorting to the threat of or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any State. It is urgent that all parties involved refrain from undertaking actions that are contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the international agreements and treaties to which Ukraine is a party.

We once again call on the parties to seek a peaceful solution to the crisis through direct political dialogue, to refrain from taking unilateral measures and to support international mediation initiatives, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/262. That process must be inclusive and must ensure the rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and full respect for the rights of minorities. In that context, the role of the Security Council, the Secretary-General, his Special Envoy and regional organizations continues to be fundamental.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Nigeria.

I want to join my colleagues in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Oscar Fernandez-Taranco for his briefing on the latest developments in Ukraine. We have observed very closely the unfolding events in Ukraine since our last meeting on 28 March, when the Council was briefed by the Secretary-General. Like others, we are very deeply concerned about the fact that the situation remains tense and, indeed, has deteriorated. The utter lawlessness and state of anarchy witnessed

in at least six states in eastern Ukraine are provocative and constitute a grave threat to peace.

Throughout our engagement on this issue, our message has been unequivocal. The need to uphold universally agreed principles and the sanctity of international law is what we have stressed. That begins with respect for the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, among which is respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States. We have also highlighted the need to use the existing bilateral and multilateral instruments to resolve the crisis. The Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and the Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership, signed by both countries in 1990 and 1997, are significant points of departure for negotiations. Those are the principles that guide Nigeria's position and that inform our stance on the issue. We believe that only a diplomatic solution, achievable by direct and genuine dialogue between the parties, can resolve the current crisis between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Over time, the world has graduated from nineteenth-century adventures. In this splendid twenty-first century, the world should not encourage or tolerate the establishment of power blocs or spheres of influence, which are not only inimical to international peace and security but especially detrimental to the conduct of friendly and balanced relations between and among States. We emphasize the futility and dangers of a military solution to the crisis. Instead, the option of dialogue between the concerned parties must be vigorously pursued without preconditions. We call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint in order to avoid any further deterioration of the situation.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to speak before the Security Council. I thank Council members for understanding the critical situation in Ukraine and for their support.

Before getting into the substance of my statement this evening, I would like start by mentioning that today Christians worldwide celebrate a great holiday, the day of the entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday. Unfortunately, today the celebration is falling under the shadow of aggression and bloodshed in Ukraine. On the eve of the holiday, terrorists coordinated by agents of the Russian Federation seized control of State buildings in several cities of the Donetsk region.

Let me quote a statement made today by Ukraine's acting President Oleksandr Turchynov:

> "A particularly dangerous situation has arisen in the city of Slavyansk, where professionally trained armed troops wearing Russian armed forces camouflage without insignia shattered the peace. This morning, a convoy of law enforcement officers who sought to protect the citizens of Slavyansk were attacked with assault rifles. The criminals opened intense fire using local people as human shields. The blood of Ukrainians has been shed for one undivided sovereign Ukraine. That blood has been shed in a war that Russia is waging against Ukraine. The aggressor has not stopped, and continues to organize unrest in the eastern regions of our country. It is not a war between Ukrainians. The situation of confrontation was artificially created with the aim of weakening and destroying Ukraine itself."

Within a short period of time, approximately one and half months, the Ukrainian Government has done everything possible to avoid confrontation through an inclusive approach to each and every region. Recently, Mr. Yatsenyuk, the Prime Minister of Ukraine, visited the southern and eastern regions — Donetsk, Lugansk, Kharkiv, Dnepropetrovsk, Odessa — addressing such issues of concern as the language policy and prospects for decentralization of power and constitutional reforms. The Government is ready to consider the significant empowerment of local authorities in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the efforts of the Government of Ukraine have been severely challenged by recent developments in the eastern regions.

According to Ukrainian intelligence data, during the past month and a half in the eastern regions of Ukraine, agents of the Russian special services embarked on large-scale operations to seize power and destabilize the situation, threatening the lives of citizens of Ukraine, for the purpose of separating those regions from our country. During the past month, our Mission has regularly informed the Security Council and all States Members of the United Nations on the latest developments in Russian actions in Crimea and other regions of Ukraine. Russia has not only been constantly increasing the number of its troops deployed

along the Ukrainian border but it has also been sending subversive groups into Ukrainian regions in order to destabilize the situation. Such specially designated groups, made up of 10 to 20 members of the special forces, primarily from the main intelligence directorate or general staff of the armed forces of the Russian Federation, infiltrated Ukrainian territory with the task of forming and organizing military combat units. Ukraine has strong evidence of the involvement of the Russian special service forces, as was mentioned in a statement the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine made public early today.

The detention of Russian citizen members of subversive groups coordinated by the Russian federal security services and military intelligence is carried out on a daily basis by the security services of Ukraine, yielding the following facts, which are just a few out of dozens.

On 8 April, Russian citizen Maria Koleda, who fulfilled intelligence service tasks to destabilize in eastern Ukraine, was detained in Herson.

The Russian saboteur who was about to seize such strategic facilities as the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant was detained in the region of Herson.

On 10 March, a representative of the Russian Federation military intelligence service was detained in Donetsk.

On 12 March, the intelligence group of the Russian armed forces that infiltrated the Herson territory from Crimea was detained at the control point.

On 20 March, a Russian citizen named Markhov, an officer of the main intelligence directorate of the general staff of Russian Federation armed forces, was detained in Chernigiv.

On the same day, a Russian citizen named Oleg Bakhtiar, one of the leaders of the Eurasian Youth Union of Russia, was detained in Kyiv as he was preparing a group of people under the guise of civil activities for the criminal seizure of the Verkhovna Rada and the Cabinet of Ministers.

All of the arrestees confirmed being part of a network of persons conducting Russian subversive activities in Ukraine.

Intercepted radio communications of the aforementioned groups, and others, with their Russian coordinators are available and provide other clear evidence.

It has also been observed that such terrorist groups are heavily armed with weapons used exclusively by Russian armed forces, namely, the Kalashnikov assault rifle AK-100 series. Those weapons have also been seen in the hands of Russian troops in Crimea.

It is clear that the tactics used by terrorists to capture admininstrative buildings in the regions of Donetsk, Lugansk and Kharkiv are identical to those used to seize the buildings of the Crimean Parliament and other Governmental building in Crimea, which video evidence confirms. Terrorist groups are acting in a very organized and pre-planned manner. One of the goals is to equip as many locally recruited marginal people as possible with arms and ammunition. That is why the primary targets of terrorists have been local offices of police and security services with weapon storage facilities. As a result, several hundred guns and automatic rifles have been seized are now in the hands of terrorists.

There is substantial video evidence of armed attacks using gunfire on local Ukrainian police stations, in Slavyansk and Kramatorsk in particular. Those videos, which have been widely broadcast on international television channels and over the Internet, have left absolutely no doubt that the terrorist groups are not the peaceful protesters that our Russian colleagues claim them to be. Rather, they are professional special forces appropriately equipped and armed by the Russian Federation.

Terrorists have started using their weapons against Ukrainian law enforcement and military officers. This morning in Slavyansk the auto convoy of the Ukrainian military was attacked by gunmen using automatic weapons. Terrorists shot and killed Captain Gennady Belichenko of the Ukrainian security services, while "Alfa" Commander Kuznietsov and Colonel Kuksa were seriously wounded, as was a police officer named Selikhov.

In the light of the aforementioned facts, the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, pursuant to our anti-terrorism law of 2003, has adopted a decision to launch a large-scale counter-terrorist operation involving the special units of the Ukrainian armed forces. We are not going to let the Crimea scenario be repeated in eastern Ukraine. We have not imposed a state of emergency as is required by the

provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine. Instead, we have prepared a counterinsurgency plan to strike at the armed terrorists.

In his statement today, acting President Oleksandr Turchynov said,

> "I would like to emphasize that those not involved in shooting at Ukrainian law enforcement officers and who surrender their weapons and leave seized administrative buildings will not be subject to prosecution."

Only a few weeks have passed since part of the territory of Ukraine was annexed by the Russian Federation. And now Russia is applying the same tools — inciting separatists by waging unprecedented anti-Ukrainian propaganda in the mass media, distorting the truth about Ukraine, sending in special troops to seize administrative and law-enforcement buildings with the aim of destabilizing the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine, and encouraging marginal groups to pursue their separatist ambitions, threatening my country's unity and territorial integrity. Apparently, through these attempts, they hope to disrupt the presidential elections in Ukraine scheduled for 25 May.

Russia often positions itself as a prominent fighter against international terrorism, but by sending its special agents to Ukraine to effect diversions and sabotage, it is actually sponsoring terrorism. Russia's statements and position are in fact supporting the terrorists in Ukraine who have seized administrative buildings, taken over the military arsenals of the Ukrainian secret services and police in several cities and opened fire on Ukrainian police. Today, official Russian TV channels have widely broadcast interviews with the three individuals — former President Yanukovych, former Prosecutor General Pshonka and former Minister of the Interior Zakharchenko — who are suspected mass murderers in Ukraine. They are wanted internationally. Ukraine has repeatedly asked its Russian partners to extradite those suspects and provide the necessary assistance for their investigation. Unfortunately, the Russian Federation has refused to do that.

Ukraine is being subjected to a large-scale terrorist operation orchestrated by the Russian Federation in subregions of the eastern part of the country. That constitutes a serious threat not only to the security of the people of Ukraine but to international peace and stability as a whole. We consider it to be the Security Council's duty to find a proper and peaceful solution to this crisis. We once again call on our Russian partners to put an immediate halt to the actions aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We demand that they leave us in peace.

(*spoke in French*)

As Ambassador Araud said, this is truly a final cry of warning.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to make an additional statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Many words have been spoken and many pronouncements made here today. But the first impression I would like to share with my colleagues is that they have not been looking at the clock. It is now 9.30 p.m. our time, which means that in Ukraine it is about 3.30 a.m. That means that in a couple of hours it will be Monday morning, 14 April. That is the date when it has been agreed that Mr. Turchynov's criminal decree sending Ukraine's military forces to suppress the protests will take effect.

We have heard many unfair pronouncements about Russia today, but of course the most unfair of all came from our Ukrainian colleague, who accused Russia of terrorism. Why did he not accuse those who terrorized his Government for months on end, up to 21 February, of terrorism? They were people who really did terrorize the forces of law and order, who really did attack police and shoot at them and at those protesting against the authorities and seemed to be attacking their country. Why were they not called terrorists? Indeed, they have been exempted from any responsibility for the criminal activities they conducted for several months.

I reiterate that, unfortunately, several clumsy accusations have been made against Russia. It has been said that Russia somehow wishes to destabilize Ukraine, if not practically crush it altogether. But why was there no response to our call at the start of the crisis for launching a dialogue on how to help Ukraine emerge from the political and economic crisis it had found itself in? Why was the crisis encouraged to continue? Why was it only just a few days ago that the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and Poland said that the European Union and Russia should indeed talk about the economic prospects for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova in connection with their joining the partnership programme of the European Union. And,

by the way, we have heard nothing about the fact that those ministerial conversations took place in Brussels.

Let us see what the response will be to the reproaches to Russia over the fact that we do not want supply Ukraine with gas for free. Let us see on 14 April what response the European ministers will give to the letter that President Putin wrote proposing that we work together to help Ukraine emerge from its economic turmoil. It is true that the people in Washington, D.C., to whom we did not send the letter, have already poisoned it for the European Union, calling it economic blackmail. But let us see whether the European Union has retained some kind of sovereignty and whether it is capable of making independent, rational decisions that can help to rescue the situation from crisis.

During the entire course of the crisis in Ukraine, Russia has never advocated aggravating it or destabilizing the country. We have absolutely no interest in doing such a thing, since for us Ukraine is too important as an economic and political partner and a country that is very close to us in many ways. We do not desire its destabilization. We are not to blame for what has produced the results that we are now witnessing. Mr. Fernandez-Taranco said that it was on 6 April that the actions were first observed whereby residents of south-eastern areas of Ukraine were seizing certain administrative buildings. And in this, of course, they learned from the experience of the Maidan in Kyiv, where for weeks and months administrative buildings were occupied, and which for some reason our Western partners saw as demonstrations of democracy.

But when it came to the south-eastern regions of Ukraine, somehow such tactics were unacceptable. A month and a half elapsed between 21 February and 6 April; a month and a half had gone by since the overthrow of President Yanukovych and the conclusion of the agreement that could have prevented an escalation of the situation. From the very beginning, all we said was that it was essential to conclude that agreement; that perhaps a constitutional assembly should be convoked; and that some decisive gesture should be made towards the south-eastern regions of Ukraine. Was any such gesture made? Finally, Mr. Yatsenyuk came, said something and left. Then Mr. Turchynov came the next day and did not seem to agree with him. It seemed they preferred to use force.

Incidentally, some very worrying tones have crept into our numerous contacts with our Western colleagues. As the Council knows, our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergei Lavrov, has been talking to Secretary of State Kerry on the phone almost every day. Kerry continually claims to understand our concern that in contacts with the Ukrainian authorities genuine efforts should be made to ensure that they demonstrate a better grasp of the concerns of the south-eastern regions of Ukraine regarding a definition of their autonomy, independence and language rights. And then suddenly one of the United States Deputy Secretaries of State gets up in Congress and says, we know that these talks will not lead anywhere, but we have to occupy the time somehow. "Occupy the time." So, really, maybe somebody in Washington, D.C., is thinking about Turchynov's military offensive scenario. In which case, there is no need to accuse Russia of attempting destabilization.

The representative of the United States noted that Vice-President Biden will be going to Ukraine, it seems, on 21 April. But maybe he should not wait for 21 April. Maybe he should go right now. Pick up the phone, call Mr. Turchynov — as he called President Yanukovych more than once before 21 February — and say to him what he said to Mr. Yanukovych. As we were informed by the Vice-President's Chief of Staff, he said, "For God's sake, just do not use force. Call off your forces from the centre of Kyiv". That was what Mr. Biden said. And now, is the United States going to encourage the fulfilment of this criminal decree authorizing the use of military force? Why, in one case, when it was a question of preparations to storm the residence of the President of Ukraine, the call was that under no circumstances should force be used, while in the current situation, it is to encourage the insane military actions that Turchynov's decree talks about? I would therefore request Ms. Power to ask Vice-President Biden to call Mr. Turchynov right now, because in a few hours' time things might take an irreversible turn.

Many colleagues mentioned the meeting that was announced for 17 April. Indeed, for some months now, in particular during the period after 21 February, we have constantly encouraged such formats for dialogue as a possible way to achieve a solution to the crisis. We agreed in principle that the meeting would take place among the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Secretary of State Kerry, Ms. Ashton and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. We very much hope that such a high-level meeting will encourage a broad political dialogue in Ukraine and show the way towards a political solution to the crisis.

But what does the Council think? If armed force is used and hostilities take place tomorrow, are we really going to sign off on that meeting? Of course, that initiative is going to be fundamentally undermined if military operations are commenced in south-eastern Ukraine.

Please, let us refrain from any accusations or speculation as to why Russia is trying to do what it is doing. Let us focus our attention on what we can actually do in this case. Here I am speaking to my Western colleagues. Let us ensure that we do not permit the Ukrainian authorities to commit the reckless actions that are currently enshrined in the criminal decree by Mr. Turchynov, and let us stop that decree from being implemented. That would have extremely significant consequences, first and foremost for the people of Ukraine, of course. That needs to be avoided.

The President: The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I will be brief, but in response to my colleague from the Russian Federation, I would like to say just a few things.

First, the United States has constantly called for de-escalation and urged restraint. That has been our consistent policy. Our consistent statements have made clear that military force is not the answer, and we have commended the Ukrainians, frankly, for enduring more than probably any country in the United Nations could or would endure without using force. Therefore, there have been no shortage of efforts at diplomacy.

Secondly, it is not the United States that has escalated the situation, it is the Russian Federation.

Thirdly, while we would like to place our faith in talks with the Russian Federation, the European Union and Ukraine, it is hard to reconcile the behaviour of the Russian Federation, the propaganda of the Russian Federation and the military actions of the Russian Federation — which range from the massing of 40,000 troops on the border to the subversive activities inside Ukraine — with their appeal for diplomacy and de-escalation. It is an appeal that we wish were in fact sincere.

Fourthly, a few times, the representative of the Russian Federation has described what is happening in the eastern cities as protests and demonstrations. I would refer back to my French colleague's comment that those claims are rooted in some idea that the Internet does not exist and that people cannot see for themselves that they are not protests and they are not demonstrations. They are professional forces carrying weapons — Russian-made weapons, as it happens — and carrying out sophisticated, coordinated military operations across a substantial number of eastern Ukrainian cities. They are not demonstrations. They are not protests. They are military operations.

Finally, the credibility of the Russian Federation has been gravely undermined. That said, we remain eager and willing to talk about how to de-escalate the situation. That will require that the Russian Federation pull back its forces, which are ominously stationed and massed at the eastern Ukrainian border. It will require that the Russian Federation work to de-escalate the situation in the light of the armed takeover of those buildings. If, in fact, the Russian Federation is interested in peace and in upholding its role as an enforcer of international peace and security, then it will engage quickly and with a wholly different degree of conviction, urgency and truthfulness than it has up to this point.

The President: The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Sergeyev (Ukraine): Several issues were raised by our Russian colleague. I would like to answer just one.

(*spoke in Russian*)

First, Mr. Churkin compared the situation in December and January with the current situation. We must recall that, at that time, the people were speaking out against the banditry of the authorities, and now it is bandits who are against the people. There is a difference there.

We cannot remain calm about the fact that several hundred separatists are holding thousands of people hostage to fear in towns. We see the standoffs on television in Kharkiv, Luhansk and Dnipropetrovsk. We cannot look on while small groups of armed people, headed up, inter alia, by agents from the Russian Federation, seize State buildings and take weapons to hand out. Indeed, those are terrorist operations that have been specially organized and orchestrated. Mr. Churkin is absolutely right, there is not much time left at all, there is just about an hour and a half. It is just as easy for him to call his President and say a few simple things to him as it is for me to do so, so I will

repeat them here. The statement that Mr. Churkin has referred very negatively to several times today was made by the acting President, Mr. Turchynov, and was addressed to those people who are now creating tension in those towns, the terrorist groups of separatists. He stated:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Those not involved in shooting at Ukrainian law enforcement officers and who will surrender their weapons and leave State administrative buildings will be released from prosecution."

(*spoke in Russian*)

Why do they not call their people and tell them to come back, sit down around the negotiating table and decide together how we can establish good neighbourly relations? That would be the right thing to do. The Government mentioned the referendum, changes to the Constitution, the retention of the language law and the fact that the problems that have cropped up over the decades and remained unsolved by previous Governments needed to be addressed at last. That is something that we need to do, but we are being prevented from doing so. I would like Mr. Churkin to listen to that and convey what he can to his Government.

(*spoke in English*)

I am sincerely thankful to the members of the Security Council who spoke in favour of a peaceful resolution of the problems in Ukraine. I am sincerely thankful for that. I also thank the members of the Security Council for understanding the critical situation in Ukraine and for any kind of support they can provide.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I shall not take up much of the Council's time. I should just like to say two things.

First, the representative of Ukraine is far too easy in characterizing his own people as bandits. The Right Sector and those who say the demonstrators should be killed are not bandits; they are simply the political elite of Kyiv. Are not those who are protesting in eastern Ukraine able to do so without Russia's say-so? Do they need Russia to say that events in Kyiv are unacceptable before they are able to grasp that? When radicals come to tell the miners of that region that they will establish their own order — surely the miners can understand that without a hint from Russia? Are the protesters able to understand how bad things have become only when Russian agents come to explain the situation to them? Do their own life experience and understanding of the situation in their own country count for nothing? How will those things influence them?

Secondly, with regard to the statement made by my American colleague Ms. Power, she did not mention her view on the decree to use armed force in eastern Ukraine. I hope that, as the Ukrainian representative has called for, following today's discussion some Western colleagues and partners will pick up the telephone and call their leaders and those in Kyiv with whom they enjoy influence, who may not act unless they get the green light from Western capitals. I would ask my colleagues to give them the red light and tell them that problems can be resolved through dialogue and not military confrontation.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 9.45 p.m.